

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

List of Articles

Director's Message--Along With Holiday Best Wishes, Three Items Of Interest To All!	2
Domestic Violence Administrator Position.....	2
Fast Track – “Transitions To Adult Living Implementation Team”	2
Six Tips On FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS, Or...“Knowing What Needs To Be Known, In Order To Do What Needs To Be Done”	2
Protection	3
What Does “Protection” Mean?.....	3
Development	4
Peer Parenting Annual Report.....	4
Permanency	5
News from FosterClub	5
Cultural Responsiveness	5
“Human Pursuits” Book Groups	5
Partnership.....	6
Tintic Partnership.....	6
Organizational Competence.....	7
New Child Abuse and Neglect Training	7
Professional Competence.....	7
Mental Health Problems and Child Maltreatment.....	7

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

Director's Message--Along With Holiday Best Wishes, Three Items Of Interest To All!

By Richard Anderson, Director

How is everyone doing? With the many celebrations at this time of year, we find ourselves stretched to meet all the expectations, while having to function in out-of-the-routine ways. I realize that at the same time we want to take a breather and enjoy some of the holiday season we also have an increase of pain and suffering in our work. Child welfare and domestic violence work often increase during the holidays. Please take care of yourselves. Find some time for mini-vacations and for simple pleasures with those you love. We at the state office wish all of you a happy and safe holiday season!

Domestic Violence Administrator Position

We have announced a domestic violence administrator level position at the state office. This is not a new position but a newly assigned classification for our former domestic violence specialist position. An extreme amount of attention has been brought to our child welfare programs by changing Federal Regulations, State Statutes, Lawsuit Settlements, and such. I feel strongly that to provide the balance that is needed with our two programs areas, we need a higher level of administrative representation for domestic violence services. The person in this position will attend all of the administrative meetings of the division, will have all of the functions of the domestic violence specialist, and, in addition, will represent the Department in functions that were previously held by a Department representative to the Governor's Council on Domestic Violence.

Fast Track – “Transitions To Adult Living Implementation Team”

The Governor strongly supports our work in improving transitions to adult living for youth aging out of foster care. Governor Olene Walker has wasted no time in building a platform of those things that she wants to accomplish in her term in office. This new infusion of support will more rapidly improve resources and support systems for youth leaving the foster care system at age 18 (or sometimes a little older). The Governor has commissioned a “Transition to Adult Living Implementation Team,” including many of our public and private partners (some of whom have been working for a long time to experience a day such as this). The Implementation Team is co-chaired by Mike Richardson from Workforce Services, and myself. We have had our first meeting, and will be moving quickly to deliver more services for our youth. The Governor has made it clear that we are to “do something” -- not just “plan to do something.” We will be putting resources in place for funding housing, clothing, transportation, getting job interviews, driver's licenses, mentoring, and educational funding. We have a great team of Independent Living Coordinators in our division who are already experts in the needs. They will be key to implementing services, along with the youth and this newly formed team.

Six Tips On FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS, Or...“Knowing What Needs To Be Known, In Order To Do What Needs To Be Done”

Here are a few items I have gleaned from exit discussions that I'm hoping might help us in doing Functional Assessments:

- Identify true “needs” as opposed to “services.” Needs and strengths go into the Functional Assessment, while services go into the Child and Family Plan. For example, parenting classes are not really a need. They are something that we may provide to meet a need. The need may be appropriately understanding and responding to demands of a two-year-old. Rather than “needs a car,” it may be “needs a way to get the laundry and grocery shopping done more efficiently so there is more energy and time to attend to the children.” Obtaining transportation will then be part of the Child

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

and Family Plan. We find, in the reviews, that we often think about services to be given before we know the real needs to be met.

- Search for and write down in the Functional Assessment the underlying issues that lead to the events that must change for the family. (One easy tool that I recommended last Friday to the Salt Lake Valley Region was to follow a question with another question on the same item, so that once you have the first answer, you can ask more questions about that same item. This helps in getting deeper into what may be underlying issues.)
- While going through the Functional Assessment, ask the question, “Do we know what we need to know, to do what we need to do, to move from where we are now to the place we need to get?” This should be broken down into smaller parts. The focus will be different with each family, depending on the issues that surface and the point in time of the Functional Assessment. For example, the focus may be on permanency, or it may be on safety.
- We can ask the questions, “Why is this working for you?” or “Why is this not working for you?” This will help in identifying some of the underlying issues and finding out what works in this family.
- Using the family’s language in the assessment is often helpful in not losing what was really expressed -- remembering that families also sometimes state needs as services, so we need to help them define the real need.
- REMEMBER, the Functional Assessment is not “worker work;” it is “team work.” (Thanks to George Taylor for this short gem.)

So far this fiscal year, we have had three successful Qualitative Case Reviews! Each one has shown marked progress. Western and Eastern Regions made substantial progress. Then, just last Friday, Salt Lake Valley Region showed not only us but also the nation that a large urban area can begin to perform up to expectations. They have increased system performance by way over twenty percent! Practice has been improving to the point that we now have two defined areas where we must focus most of our attention -- “Functional Assessment” and “Long-Term View.” This is much better than when had to look at all the parts of the model. Thank you all so much for the amazing work you’ve done to bring this about!

Protection

What Does “Protection” Mean?

By Charlotte Gibbons, CPS Specialist

The dictionary definitions protection as: Safeguarding of somebody or something; the act of preventing somebody or something from being harmed or damaged, or the state of being kept safe.

As I think about the issues surrounding Child and Family Services’ charge to protect children and the often-overwhelming job of caseworkers, I can’t help but recall my past experience as a caseworker and how much the job has changed. Not only have the cases gotten more complex and difficult, but also the demands made of caseworkers and the corresponding efforts made by caseworkers amaze me. I know that children in Utah are being better protected and their best interests are better served then ever before.

Much of the change I believe can be attributed to a division-wide shift in consciousness. Through extensive training efforts to teach Practice Model Principles and incorporate them into practice, case outcomes and the public view of the division have shifted. One of the key components of the change is the implementation of family teams. In a family team opportunities to empower the family and provide appropriate services are enhanced exponentially. It is no longer a caseworker trying to improve family functioning and protect the

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

children; caseworkers now engage schools, therapists, extended family, and religious communities (the list goes on and on). As caseworkers strive to engage the family team as early as possible to assess the family's strengths and needs, once these are identified then plans can be tailored to help each family and family member improve their situation. It is also through a conscious effort to get a team involved in helping the family and working together that change can be sustained.

Thanks to all the caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators who have embraced the concept of quickly getting a team organized to empower the family. The children of Utah have been better protected than ever, and Utah families have been honored, empowered, and supported in ways that were not possible in the past practice paradigms.

Development

Peer Parenting Annual Report

By Carol Miller, Program Support Specialist

During our recent Region Directors' meeting, Becky Oakley presented the Peer Parenting Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2002-2003, entitled "Families Building Families." This report contains statewide, regional, and office breakdowns of the usage of peer parenting throughout the state of Utah. The following is a summary of the exciting things happening in our peer parenting program.

Peer parenting began in 1991 from within Child and Family Services as a "home grown" program, which Child and Family Services is very proud of. Peer parenting is built upon the conviction that parents and children are best served when they are united as a family in a safe and nurturing environment. When foster parents reach out to their foster child's parents as peer parents, they mentor and teach healthy parenting skills, resolving many of the factors that led to the agency's involvement. When neighborhood teams emerged, many foster care workers received in-home cases and requested peer parents for their in-home families as well. The peer parent (paid \$8.75 per hour) works individually with the parent (the children are present) teaching basic parenting skills for five to 10 hours per week for up to 120 days. The parent works through our standardized parenting skills-based curriculum, which they keep as a support and resource long after peer parenting is done. The most important part of learning new skills, and one thing that separates peer parenting from traditional parenting classes, is that the majority of time is spent implementing the newly acquired parenting skills in "real parenting" situations (at the doctor's office, grocery store, school, bedtime, etc.). Here are some fiscal year 2002-2003 statistics:

- Two hundred and thirty-nine Child and Family Services workers accessed peer parenting.
- Three hundred and ninety at-risk families worked with peer parenting.
- Peer parenting cost per family decreased 8% with in-home families and 6% in reunification families.
- Approximately 75% of peer parenting was with in-home cases.
- Peer parenting has raised the professionalism of foster parents through advanced training on being a member of the child and family team, documentation, etc.

Peer parenting has been implemented statewide since 1997, and each region has contracted with a foster parent to coordinate the peer parenting program in their area. With questions or concerns, please contact Becky Oakley, statewide coordinator, at 801-368-4499 or your local peer parent area coordinator.

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

Permanency

News from FosterClub

By Carol Miller, Program Support Specialist

I am on a mailing list for the FosterClub, which I felt contains beneficial information to share with you. The following is an excerpt from a recent email that I received from them.

>>>For Grownups:

Holiday Cards by FosterClub

As we all know, most children excitedly await the Holiday Season. But for many children in foster care, the Holidays compound the sadness and loneliness brought on by absent parents, sibling, pets and friends. FosterClub.com has designed a Holiday greeting card for you to send to the Foster Children on your list. We've made it friendly and cheerful with a warm invitation to call you (you provide a phone number!) even if it is "just to talk".

www.fosterclub.com/grownups/christmas_card.cfm

>>> For Kids:

Check out what the youth have to say.

Come find out what the youth are saying about this weeks talk back question, "Are you treated differently at school because you're in foster care?"

www.fosterclub.com/speakUp/talkback.cfm

>>> For Teens and Young Adults

Youth Can Check Out These Short Success Stories

We have a quick list of former foster kids who have overcome difficulties and found ways to achieve success. This week we are featuring April Curtis.

www.fyi3.com/fyi3/Independent/success/Curtis.cfm

If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please send an e-mail with your email address and "Unsubscribe" in the subject line to mark@fosterclub.com

For more information about FosterClub, please visit www.fosterclub.com/grownups or call 503-717-1552

Cultural Responsiveness

"Human Pursuits" Book Groups

By Reba Nissen, Mentor Program Coordinator

I was listening to my car radio one morning on my way to work and heard about a book group at the city library that was offered in both Spanish and English, and the books were about families in six different Latino cultures from Mexico to South America. I recalled my work in Ogden, working with families who had newly arrived from Mexico and other Chicano families who had lived in Utah for generations. The differences between these families were many. I worked with a family from Guatemala, whose culture also differed from other Latino families with whom I worked.

This book group intrigued me. I envisioned bilingual workers working on their Spanish reading and conversing skills, families whose primary language is Spanish working on their English reading and conversing skills, and everyone coming together to learn about different cultures in families. I called the library to find out more. The librarian referred me to "Human Pursuits," an organization supported by the Utah Humanities Council. This organization has a grant to provide the book groups and pays scholars to facilitate them. Currently, Human Pursuits is running book groups at the Weber County Library, the Sprague Branch of the Salt Lake City

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

Library, and at the Sandy Senior Center. Human Pursuits also has a detailed website with information about the books and their organization in Spanish and English.

For more information about the groups or to start your own group free of charge, visit the Human Pursuits website at www.humanpursuits.org.

Partnership

Tintic Partnership

By Bert Peterson, Western Region Milestone Coordinator

Western Region has a large geographical area with a very diverse population. This diversity creates some rather unique challenges for the region. One such area that has gathered a great deal of attention from the Western Region administration and staff in recent months is the small school district located in the western part of Juab County.

The Tintic School District is the second smallest school district in the state, with 308 students (2000). Only Daggett School District is smaller. It comprises such familiarly named communities as Eureka, Callao, and Trout Creek as its larger towns. There are two high schools (Tintic High and West Desert High) and three elementary schools. West Desert High, grades 7-12, has 34 students. West Desert Elementary has nine students.

The region's partnership with the school system is a unique one in that the region has very limited access to the communities without the assistance of the schools. These small communities are generally quite closed to outsiders and especially government outsiders. Being able to do the necessary work of the division in these communities requires a unique approach and an important partnership with the school district.

The schools have essentially become "community resource centers" for the communities in which they reside. The school staff have become trusted members of these small communities, and they are the people parents will allow guarded access to their private lives, through their children.

The FACT project was a thriving entity in this school district and had a system of service developed that provided an excellent resource for the community. When the funding was withdrawn on that program two years ago this school district and Child and Family Services immediately felt the impact. Child and Family Services lost entry to the communities, and the school district lost resources. In recent months Western Region administration and the school district administration and school principles have undertaken to essentially restore elements of this program to provide needed resources to this small, under-funded district. Central Utah Mental Health, Public Health, the EPA (Eureka is a superfund site), law enforcement, school district staff, the LDS Church, and Child and Family Services have come to the table to look at ways to assist the school district with needed resources. Contacts have been made with the schools of nursing and social work at BYU for assistance. The region has recently committed the service of three experienced staff and some funding. The other agencies have committed resources to assist in prevention and intervention with children and families in need. This is once again becoming an excellent partnership and an opportunity to provide some real hands-on social work with children and families.

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

Organizational Competence

New Child Abuse and Neglect Training

By Jerna Mitchell, New Employee Training Manager

On the 1st of December, a group of trainers and experts met together to review the new child abuse and neglect training curriculum. This training will replace the two hours that have been taught in CORE 101 during the past several years. It is a more extensive and thorough child abuse and neglect training. The intention is that staff will have the knowledge and exposure to identify abuse and neglect in every category and that they will know indicators and contributing factors associated with abuse and neglect. The training also includes using solution-focused questioning when dealing with issues of abuse and neglect. This connects the training to our Utah State model - the Practice Model.

The training of trainers for the new curriculum will be held on the 12th of January of the new year. From that point, the training will be available to new employees in each region. Experienced staff and supervisors will be invited to attend the training and may do so as needed to meet their needs.

Professional Competence

Mental Health Problems and Child Maltreatment

By Linda Wininger, State Milestone Coordinator

Recently, the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment began a series of articles addressing the issue of child maltreatment and mental health. The complete article can be found at: <http://www.gocwi.org/nrccm/publications.html>. There are other interesting articles to be found there as well.

The first article in the series features a specially prepared article on personality disorders and child maltreatment. The *Solution Series* is designed to provide a compact source of information around variables that may influence the occurrence of child maltreatment in families.

Generally, each article attempts to answer three questions:

- What do we know about the nature of this variable's contribution to the occurrence of child maltreatment?
- What do we know about how to assess the nature and extent of the variable's contribution in specific cases?
- What do we know about how to intervene to alter the impact of this variable?

The article on personality disorders focuses on the assessment of personality disorders as contributing factors to child maltreatment and their implications for intervention.

Overall, 10 percent of the U.S. population has been diagnosed with a personality disorder. However, the percentage of people with personality disorders is highest among parents who come to the attention of the child welfare system. In addition, personality disorders may be exacerbated by the sorts of crisis that bring parents to the attention of social welfare, child welfare, mental health, and justice systems.

The proportion of parents who maltreat their children and are also found to have mental health problems varies from 20 to 70 percent, depending on the source of the sample being studied. It is likely that CPS workers under-identify parental mental health problems, both because CPS investigations generally do not include in-depth assessments of parental functioning and because CPS workers usually are not trained to identify mental health problems.

Child and Family Services Update

January 12, 2004

In recent years, the child welfare field has begun to focus attention on the relationship between problematic patterns of parental functioning and child welfare, specifically focusing on child maltreatment. Federal and state initiatives have been created to develop interventions for cases involving domestic violence and child welfare and parental substance abuse and child welfare. However, much less attention has been paid to parental mental health problems and child welfare.

When mental health services are provided to parents, rehabilitation focuses on assisting the adult in self-care and independent functioning. However, when adults with mental health problems are also parents, their illness can impede their ability to provide appropriate childcare. This is an issue that may go unnoticed and/or unaddressed by mental health specialists.

Unlike psychoses and major depression, personality disorders do not carry a mental disorder diagnosis. Also, unlike mental disorder, personality disorders are not likely to result in periodic or repeated psychiatric hospitalization. As a consequence, personality disorders are often regarded as less severe than mental disorders. However, because of the specific deficits that characterize personality disorders and because of their lifelong nature, having a parent with a personality disorder can be much more detrimental to a child than having a parent with a mental disorder.

This article elaborates on the possible origins of personality disorders, the characteristics of personality disorders, and common personality disorders among parents in the child welfare system including Dependent Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder. A list of factors to consider in assessing situations is included as well as the implications of mental health problems for child maltreatment.

The article concludes with the assertion of the importance of “recognizing that impairments caused by personality disorders effect children. Sometimes these parental deficits can be compensated for and the child can be appropriately raised in the home with the parent. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain child safety and well-being as primary and protect children from physical, sexual and psychological harm. Children should not be sacrificed for their parents’ well-being.”

I would invite you to read the article. I think you will find it interesting and informative. In addition, there are a number of other articles available on this Website that may be of interest to you.